

# MENDON TOWN PLAN

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## ***INTRODUCTION***

### **LOCATION AND REGIONAL IMPORTANCE**

The Town of Mendon is a rural community located in east central Rutland County. The village area is on Route 4 in the northwest section of the town. The village area contains the Town Office, a church, the Grange Hall, the Town Garage, numerous commercial enterprises, and many residences. Route 4, connecting Rutland with the Killington-Pico ski areas, is a major east-west traffic corridor through Mendon.

A watershed lies within the Town boundaries and provides a major portion of the water supply for the City of Rutland. The land has moderate to severe limitations for development because of either steep slopes, shallow depth to bedrock, very rocky soil, or extreme wetness. It is, therefore, essential that proper planning is undertaken prior to any proposed development.

### **THE TOWN PLAN**

The Mendon Town Plan embodies the residents' policies for guiding future growth and development. Adoption by the members of the Select Board is the only means available for the Town to legally establish such a plan. Town Plans may designate land uses and include specific programs for implementation.

As a document, the Plan does not, in and of itself, implement policy. This is accomplished by the enactment of four By-Laws:

- |                              |                                      |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <b>1. Zoning Regulations</b> | <b>3. Subdivision Regulations</b>    |
| <b>2. Official Town Maps</b> | <b>4. Capital Budget and Program</b> |

Since the By-Laws are intended to implement the Plan, their content must reflect the findings, recommendations and policy statements contained in the Plan. Revisions or amendments to the Plan may be prepared either by the Planning Commission or by qualified consultants at the request of and direction by the members of the Select Board.

The Planning Commission must hold at least one public hearing within the Town on any proposed revision of the Plan. Subsequent to the hearing, the Plan, or its revision, must be submitted to the Select Board and a copy filed with the Town Clerk for public review. The Select Board will then hold a hearing. If there are no further amendments, the Select Board may approve and officially adopt the Plan or Plan revision, which then becomes effective as an official town document. Town Plans are in force for five years from either the date of initial adoption, or from the date of accepted revisions and amendments. No changes in the By-Laws are possible if, after five years with no amendment or revisions, a plan expires. However, all By-Laws then in effect remain valid and binding.

**Recommendations:**

It is recommended that the Town Plan be reviewed every year, and if necessary, be revised and amended. Data contained in the Mendon 2015 Study should be utilized to help provide direction to the Planning Commission in future revisions and updates to the Town Plan.

**THE TOWN GOALS****GENERAL**

Preserve the present environment and character of the Town, its rural appearance and atmosphere.

Meet the civic, economic, educational, social, recreational, and cultural needs of its residents.

Maintain the spaciousness of the residential areas.

Preserve the rights of the residents to manage their own land, to the fullest extent possible, consistent with Town By-Laws, planning policy and State law.

Preserve the existing natural, scenic, and historic areas.

To aid the Mendon Historical Society in discovering and preserving the history of the Town of Mendon, the State of Vermont and the United States of America.

**ECONOMIC**

Encourage a greater diversity of rural, agricultural, recreational and commercial enterprises for both seasonal and year-round businesses.

**TOWN SERVICES**

Provide the most efficient and economical basic town services, and to adequately plan for future growth.

Assure the availability of high-quality education for our children.

Encourage adequate recreational facilities for all, with special emphasis on year-round use of the natural environment.

***THE COMMUNITY*****TOWN GOVERNMENT**

The Select Board is the official governing body of the Town of Mendon. The Select Board consists of three elected residents, each serving a three-year term. The responsibilities of the Select Board cover the general administration of Town affairs, the annual budget, the

appointment of the Planning Commissioners, the Zoning Board of Adjustment, the Administrative Assistant, the Road Commissioner, the Health Officer, and the Zoning Administrator.

## **CAPITAL BUDGET AND PROGRAM**

The Capital Budget and Program shall be reviewed annually.

## **THE ECONOMY**

### **Historic and Current Activities**

The economy of Mendon depends largely on the industries and tourism of the region. The Town offers a variety of services to area residents, as well as tourists. The encouragement and stimulation of year-round businesses, at-home businesses and appropriate industries would serve to strengthen the Town's economic base.

### **Desired Future Development To Meet Needs**

Mendon is a rural residential community without a significant number of commercial establishments. Mendon's rural character and its proximity to major commercial districts has predetermined that the town become and remain a "bedroom community" with residents commuting to work in adjacent communities. The Mendon 2015 Report found a strong preference for residential development, followed by the development of business activities that would maintain the rural atmosphere. Though development of professional offices would be supported, residents clearly indicate a preference for the development of recreational business and activities to attract tourists and maintain the rural appearance of the community. The comments clearly indicate that the rural appearance of the community, regardless of commercial or residential development, must be retained. Several respondents indicated a need for stricter zoning, building, or other restriction to control development and ensure that exterior conditions of businesses do not detract from the rural appearance of the community.

### **Business Needs**

Mendon's ability to attract and retain small private businesses and professional services is dependent upon its ability to provide a state-of-the-art infrastructure. This state-of-the-art infrastructure includes, but is not limited to, digital connectivity (phone and internet), Y5 wireless connectivity, and sewer and water services. Efforts should be undertaken to improve existing services and introduce new communication and transportation technology. Transportation is an important component of community life and directly influences the economy of the community. Transportation initiatives should include public transportation and park-and-ride facilities.

### **Other Considerations**

Development of commercial and professional activities, within the confines of Mendon, should focus on those activities that do not significantly reduce open space, increase pollution (air,

water, noise) or burden the Town’s existing infrastructure. Consideration should be given to compatibility of activities with adjacent communities, design and appearance of proposed structures, and the encouragement of renovating existing facilities.

**Recommendations:**

Encourage the growth of small commercial and professional services and at-home businesses that compliment current economic activities and do not significantly reduce open space areas, increase pollution of the air, water and noise levels or burden the town’s existing infrastructure.

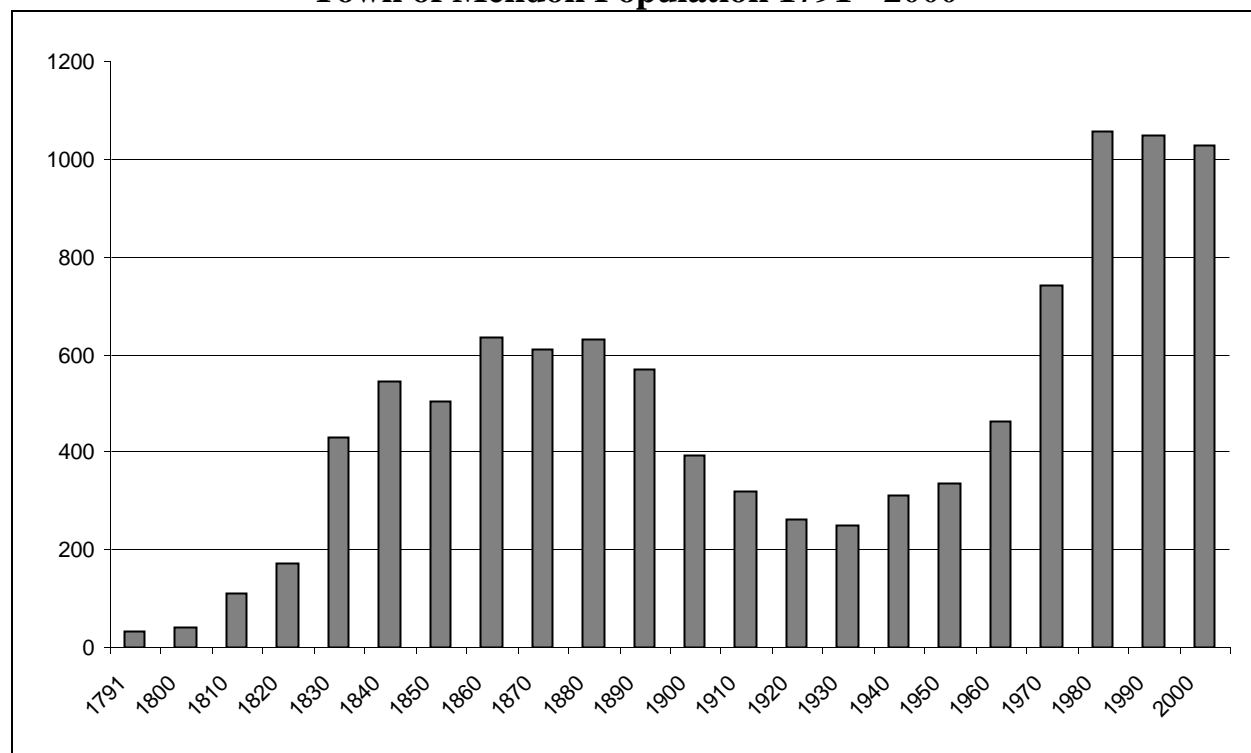
Encourage commercial development and growth that meets the desire of the residents, while protecting the rural character of the community, by utilizing zoning regulations and careful development review by the Mendon Planning Commission.

Apply for Designated Village Center status to support revitalization of the Mendon Village Center.

**POPULATION AND GROWTH TRENDS**

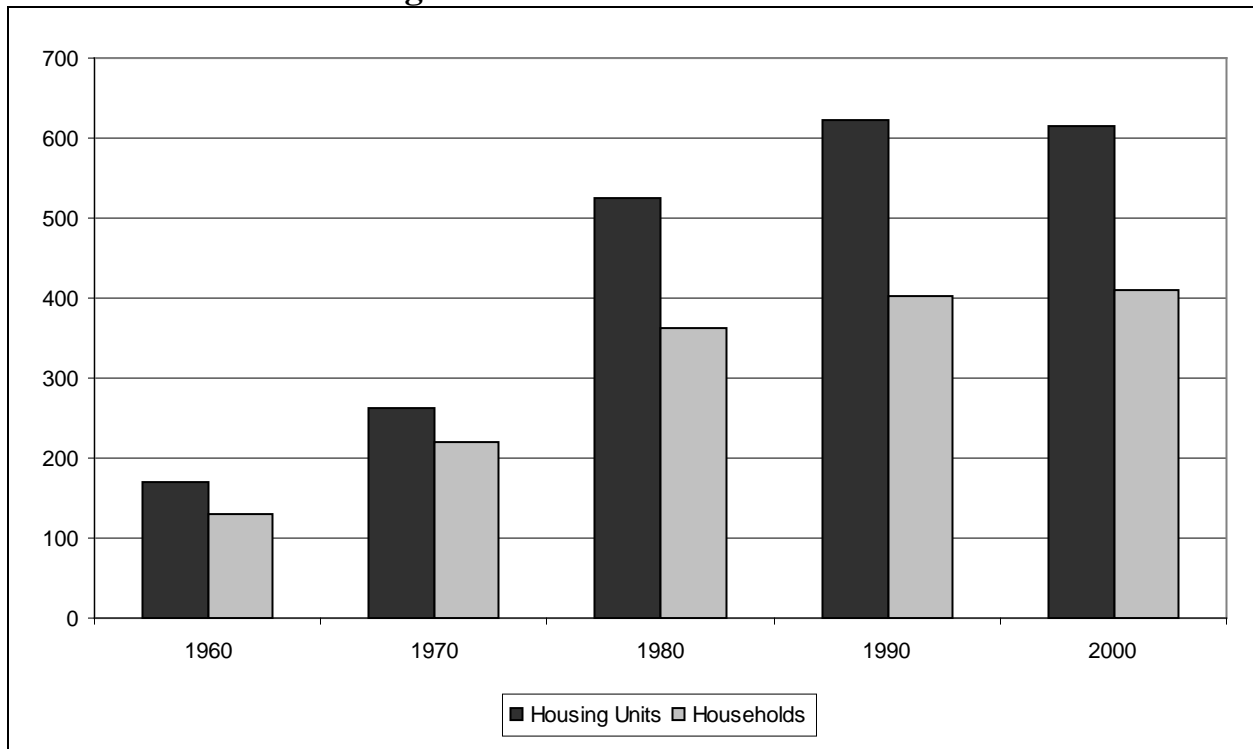
The Town of Mendon has experienced moderate population growth over the past several decades. Shown below is Mendon's recent population history, as reported by the U.S. Census and the current population. The Vermont Year Book's estimate for 1999 is 1,056. These figures represent the year-round population and do not include seasonal residents.

**Town of Mendon Population 1791 - 2000**



source: US Census Bureau & University of Vermont Center for Rural Studies ([crs.uvm.edu/indicators](http://crs.uvm.edu/indicators))

## Town of Mendon Housing Units and Year-Round Households 1960 - 2000



source: US Census Bureau & University of Vermont Center for Rural Studies ([crs.uvm.edu/indicators](http://crs.uvm.edu/indicators))

### **Recommendations:**

It is recommended that the rate and location of population growth in Mendon be guided so as to correspond with the Town's land capability and the ability of the Town to expand its services. Land use regulations shall continue to be reviewed and adjusted to accomplish this goal.

Commercial and industrial growth has been determined to have serious impacts on the Town's ability to provide adequate roads, fire and police protection. Therefore, it is recommended that proposed commercial and industrial uses be located in the existing village and commercial districts to minimize their impact on the Town's ability to provide these services. Skiing and snowboarding related businesses should be allowed in the Ski Area District and should be planned to minimize the impact on the town for providing services to this remote area.

It is recommended that the Town continue to require new developers to provide individual onsite private water systems. Onsite sewage disposal systems should also be privately constructed and maintained unless connection to the Alpine Pipeline is available to the developer.

### **HOUSING AND DEVELOPMENT**

A review of Mendon's housing situation identifies little change in the number and type of housing in the town over the past decade. Overall, the total number of housing units has declined slightly, from 623 units in 1990 to 616 units in 2000. In Mendon, because of its close proximity to the Killington and Pico ski resorts, close to 1/3 of the housing in town is seasonal. Of those



living in town year round, 80% own the home they occupy. Single family homes comprise about 72% of the housing market. The 167 multi-family housing units in the town are comprised almost entirely of condominiums and other seasonally-occupied housing. Only 40 multi-family units are available to year round renter families living in Mendon.

It is expected that Mendon will see little growth in the next decade, with some projections even calling for the population to decrease. The median household size is projected to decrease as well, following state and national trends. This indicates that the small number of housing starts will most likely continue to keep pace with demand in the town. It should be noted that the vacancy rate for housing in Mendon is 3.5%. This may indicate a tight housing market, where current and future residents in town are restricted by the housing options available.

Housing is generally considered to be affordable for the Town's current residents. While Mendon has the second highest median home value in the county, its residents also enjoy the highest median income in the county, which for most families offsets the high home values. Housing costs are affecting Mendon's renter households much more than its owner households. The median gross rent in Mendon is \$709, close to 30% higher than the \$517 median rent for the county as a whole, according to the 2000 Census. Thirty-nine percent of Mendon renters are paying over 30 % of the household's income on housing costs. Buying a home in Mendon may prove to be difficult except for those buyers with higher than average incomes, especially for first-time home buyers looking to move from other parts of the county where median incomes are generally lower.

For Mendon's homeowners, housing is significantly more affordable, with only 18% in unaffordable situations. For homeowners, housing becomes significantly less affordable when they seek to move up to higher quality housing. This could be due to the fact that there is not a large market of higher quality homes for residents to move up to.

Mendon's rural character, and its proximity to major commercial districts, has predetermined the town as a bedroom community in which the majority of its residents travel to other locations for work. In the year 2000, only 14% of Mendon's employed residents worked in town. To look at this situation from a different angle, only 8% of the employment in town is filled by Mendon residents. While most of Mendon's current residents are not having trouble affording their homes, moving into Mendon from other areas of the county, where the median income is much lower, would most likely prove unaffordable for the average household. While there are many reasons why workers employed in Mendon do not reside in the town, this is an extremely high ratio of out-of-town employees. Residents currently living in other areas of the county, but employed in Mendon, may not be able to live closer to their employment, considering Mendon's current housing market.

As much of its land is steep terrain, watershed, and unacceptable for septic or above the elevation of 2000 feet, any type of housing is limited. In certain zoning districts, this requires a minimum lot size of 2, 3, or 5 acres.

The zoning has allowed for affordable housing primarily in the village district where land is suitable for building and plots are available down to one-half acre. As discussions for the

development of a more traditional village center continue in the town, the ability of this area to accommodate a variety of housing types, to meet a range of income levels, should be explored.

All new construction should be energy efficient. Alternative sources of energy for heating and cooling, other than oil or electricity, are encouraged.

### **Recommendations:**

It is recommended that all new building construction meet the current FHA standards for insulation and be encouraged to include renewable energy sources for heating and cooling in their designs.

The Town should support the development of rental housing available to year round residents. This housing should represent a variety of housing types (single family, duplex, apartments, etc.) to meet varying household needs, as the Town determines to be appropriate for Mendon.

## **DESIGN CONTROL DISTRICT**

It is recommended the Town study the creation of a design control district within the designated Village area.

## **COMMUNITY SERVICES**

### **EDUCATION**

The Town of Mendon, a member of the Rutland Northeast Supervisory Union District, operates a cooperative education program with Chittenden at Barstow Memorial School for grades K-8. **Mendon students make up about 47% of the total present enrollment, or approximately 132 of the total 282 students.** The capacity of the school, by state law, is based on 50 square feet per student in grade K and 30 square feet per student for all other grades. It is not anticipated that the total Barstow enrollment will change significantly in the next five years.

Senior High School students (Grades 9 through 12) in Mendon can elect to attend public or private educational facilities with funding provided by the Town. **Currently, 54 Mendon students are attending High School. There is one student at Proctor and one student at Mill River. The rest are at Rutland High School. High School tuition estimates for the 1999-2000 School Year are \$373,822, or an average of \$6,923 per student.**

### **Recommendations:**

It is recommended that the Town continue to cooperate with the surrounding communities in providing its pupils the best education possible, and addressing educational needs as they arise.

## **WATER SUPPLY AND PUBLIC SEWER**

Lacking a municipal water system, the majority of residents depend on individual home aquifers for their water supply. The Town must continue to protect against any impairment of the quality of water supply available to its residents.

The Town of Mendon has at least four owner-user water systems: Eastridge Acres, Brookwood, the Village, and Sherwood Park. The older homes in Mendon have either springs or wells while the newer homes are supplied mainly by drilled artesian wells.

The State of Vermont has given the Town of Mendon a waste load allocation based on the capacity of the Otter Creek to assimilate treated waste water.

In 1984 the Alpine Pipeline Company built a sewage collection system along Route 4 from Sherburne Pass through Mendon to the juncture of Stratton Road and Killington Avenue, where it connects to the City of Rutland Sewer System. The capacity through part of Mendon has been increased to accommodate more growth in the future.

The Selectmen assigned 78% of this allocation to Alpine Pipeline Co. since the Town did not possess the financial capability to construct a public sewer system. This makes possible connection to the pipeline by Mendon residents and businesses. The Town retained 22% of the Waste Load Allocation.

The Alpine Pipeline system alleviates existing pollution and allows for future growth within the town along Route 4 and adjacent areas.

### **Recommendations:**

It is recommended that no municipal water system be considered at this time, however, a public water system in parts of Mendon may be considered in the future if contamination of the groundwater should become a problem.

The Town should issue requests periodically that suggest residents test their water supply to insure the continued quality of the potable water and take steps to mitigate any sources that do not meet current drinking water standards.

Protection of the watersheds in the Town should be a priority to insure the continued potable quality of the water supply to springs and wells. Mitigation measures to repair degraded potable water sources should be required by the Town Health Officer where necessary.

Sewer connections to the Alpine pipeline should be encouraged for all new construction along Route 4. Since many of the soils in town are not conducive to the disposal of sewage by means of septic system construction, connection to the Alpine Pipeline should be promoted whenever feasible.

### **UTILITIES**

Mendon is served by various telephone companies, Central Vermont Public Service Corporation, various fuel oil and propane providers and the Adelpia cable television company.

### **POLICE PROTECTION**

Mendon relies on Troop C Barracks of the Vermont State Police, the Rutland County Sheriff's Department, a Municipal Constable and a Special Officer.

The Town will continue to aggressively enforce the traffic laws on the streets and highways in the Town. Safety of the Town's residents and visitors is a priority in the community. Recent statistics show that aggressive traffic enforcement has led to a significant drop in traffic accidents and fatalities within the Town limits.

## **FIRE PROTECTION**

Mendon is served by the Rutland Fire Department, on a contractual basis, since there are no fire protection facilities located within the Town. At present, contracted fire protection services appear to be the most economical and best arrangement for the Town. Over the years there has been discussion of establishing a Volunteer Fire Department, however, because of the large expanse and topography of the Town, and the lack of able bodied persons during working hours, this appears unrealistic.

### **Recommendations:**

Continue the existing contractual arrangements with the Rutland City Fire Department, and periodically review alternative possibilities.

## **EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AND HAZARD MITIGATION**

Mendon has an All-Hazard Mitigation Plan in place that addresses hazard mitigation strategies and measures. These strategies and measures may reduce the frequency of occurrence or avert the hazard by redirecting the impacts by means of physical structures or land treatments; adapt to the hazard by the modification of structures or standards; avoid the hazard by stopping or limiting the development in hazardous areas.

The types of hazards covered by the Mendon Plan include Floods, Winter Storms, Ice Storms, High Winds, Drought, Landslides and Erosion, Hurricanes, Tornadoes, Earthquakes, Power Outages, Wildfires or Forest Fires, Structure Fires, Aircraft Crashes, Roadway Accidents, Hazardous Materials, Radiological Incidents, Chemical or Biological Incidents, Water Supply Contamination, Dam Failures, Terrorism and Risk Assessment.

Mendon also has developed a Rapid Response Plan that has an overview of emergency response procedures that was last updated in **May 2004**.

### **Recommendations:**

The Select Board, with the assistance of the Town Constable, Town Road Commissioner, Rutland Fire Department and the State Hazard Mitigation Officer, should review and adjust the Town's All-Hazard Mitigation Plan and Rapid Response Plan every **five years** to stay current, based on the changing local needs and priorities.

## **HEALTH AND MEDICAL SERVICES**

The only community-provided health services are those rendered by the Town Health Officer. These consist mainly of sewage system inspection, water sampling for bacteria, health violations, and investigations of reported epidemics. For medical services, the Town contracts with the Rutland Visiting Nurses Association, relies on private practitioners and uses the Rutland

Regional Medical Center for extreme medical needs and surgery. Finally, the Rutland Mental Health Service provides counseling and aid to Mendon residents. There appears to be no need or reason to change these services at this time.

Another health concern is the preservation of acceptable Air Quality from degradation by fly ash, dust, fumes, vapors, gases, and other forms of air pollution. No airborne emissions should be permitted which can cause any unreasonable damage to the health of humans, animals, vegetation, or cause excessive soiling on the property of others.

The increased number of incidents of lost skiers from the Killington and Pico ski areas often require safety and emergency personnel to be called out for search and rescue. Many of these searches are initiated along or end up on the Wheelerville Road. The lost skiers sometimes require medical treatment due to the exposure to the elements.

### **Recommendations:**

It is recommended that a Town representative contact Killington ski area to request that the ski area increase the signage, where skiers typically ski off-trail. The additional signage should contain an advisory message that skiing off-trail may result in serious injury or death and that skiing off-trail and getting lost may result in the skiers being required to reimburse the cost of a search and rescue operation by local public safety personnel. The terms and conditions printed on lift tickets should strongly reinforce the appropriate warnings regarding skiing off-trail and the possible consequences.

## **HISTORIC SITES**

Several buildings and sites in the Town are of historic interest. The Wiggins house, on Route 4 in the Village, was, at one time, the Mendon Post office. The Earl Cram house, also in the Village, was a stagecoach stop and eating place during the 1800's. There are three buildings in Town which are old schoolhouses - Sharp's house on Meadow Lake Drive and a house on Town Line Road. A third, the former Town Hall, has been relocated to the Town of Tinmouth. Two of the oldest homes in Town are on Cream Hill Road, built by two of the first settlers, James Eggleston and James Ranger. Across from the Mendon Church lies the grave site of "OLD JOHN", General Edward Ripley's Civil War Horse. This location was also the former site of the Ripley House, a stagecoach stop, and tavern. On Wheelerville Road at Deermont Pond is an example of an old hill type farmhouse. For additional Historical sites, see the "History of Mendon".

## **CEMETERIES**

There are seven cemeteries in Mendon. Beyond the Tamarack Notch camp is a small family plot called Wilkin's Cemetery. Between Mendon Mountain Orchard and Crossman's garage is a small cemetery surrounded by apple trees and brush. The Eggleston family is buried in a small plot on Cream Hill Road. At the southern end of the Wheelerville Road, around McLaughlin Falls, is a small cemetery completely overgrown by trees. Another cemetery is located on the northern end of the Wheelerville Road. Sounder's Cemetery, on Town Line road, is so named for the Revolutionary War soldier, Isaac Saunders, who is buried there. Only one area in Town is

still in use as a burial ground. It is located on the east side of Meadow Lake Drive and is called Tenney Cemetery.

**Recommendations:**

It is recommended that all Historic Sites and Cemeteries within the Town be officially marked, mapped and preserved.

**SOLID WASTE DISPOSAL**

Mendon is currently a member of the Rutland County Solid Waste District. The District negotiates for and provides methods for disposal of solid waste. Mendon residents can utilize these services or contract with private haulers. The District also provides facilities for the collection of recyclable materials and Mendon residents may use these facilities free of charge.

**TRANSPORTATION**

Mendon’s road network is dictated, in large part, by the town’s topography. It includes one major arterial highway, three collectors and several local roads. U.S. Route 4 serves as the main link between Rutland City and the Killington/Pico ski areas, and on a larger scale, connects New Hampshire to New York, serving as one of the primary east-west corridors across the State. Its potential impact for development is significant. An effective transportation network is paramount for the safety and convenience of the community.

There are 27.188 total road miles in the town, classified as follows:

State Highways (U.S. 4).....	5.928 miles
Class 2 Town Highways.....	4.44 miles
Class 3 Town Highways .....	16.82 miles
Class 4 Town Highways.....	3.28 miles
<b>TOTAL .....</b>	<b>27.188 miles</b>

In general, these classifications reflect the capacity and level of use of each route. Towns receive different levels of state assistance for road maintenance depending on the classification, with a maximum allowable percentage in each category.

*Class 2 Town Highways:* Those highways selected as the most important highways (after state roads) in each town. As far as practicable they are selected with the purpose of securing trunk lines from town to town, and to places that, by their nature, have more than the normal amount of traffic.

*Class 3 Town Highways:* Those town highways that make up the majority of local roads. The minimum standards for Class 3 Highways are a highway negotiable, under normal conditions, during all seasons of the year by a standard manufactured pleasure car. This would include, but not be limited to, sufficient surface and base, adequate drainage, sufficient width and suitability for maintenance.

*Class 4 Town Highways:* All other town highways. The Select Board determines which highways are Class 4 town highways.

## Traffic Volume

The most recent traffic counts, taken in 2002 by VTrans, indicate an average daily traffic of 11,400 vehicles on Route 4 west of Medway Road and 10,700 vehicles north of Old Turnpike Road.

Statistics from 2001 showed a daily average of 1200 vehicles on Park Lane and 1700 vehicles on Town Line Road. The hierarchy of the road network is indicative of the range in traffic volumes on local roads to that on US 4.

Marble Valley Regional Transit District provides public transportation along US 4 , as a fixed route service. Complimentary para-transit service, and service for the elderly and persons with disabilities, is also available. Stops are located at the Mendon Mountain Orchards, Town Line Road, Nordic Inn and the Cortina Inn.

According to VTrans' Crash Location Report, Mendon has experienced a high accident rate along US 4. Between 1998 and 2002 there were seven crashes, with five injuries and one fatality. When identifying areas of local concern for the Town's 2004 disaster mitigation plan, Mendon town/public safety officials identified the section of US 4 from 0.5 miles west of its intersection with Wheelerville Road east to its intersection with Old Turnpike Road as a high accident area. Seasonally hazardous driving conditions are compounded by the high speeds at which many through-drivers travel, particularly at peak periods during the ski season. In the warmer months, bicyclists travel on US 4, compounding the safety issue.

Opportunities to increase the safety, and alleviate the congestion along US 4, include the reduction of speed limits, enforcement of existing traffic regulations, and the promotion of public transportation. Another is the practice of access management, a series of tools consisting of locating new intersections (or relocating old ones) to line up with one another and minimize potential accidents, installing stop signs and traffic lights in appropriate locations, and ensuring that driveways (curb-cuts) are located in safe and efficient places. In a village area, having two businesses share a driveway, for example, reduces the number of conflict points where an accident is likely to occur.

Mendon has 17 bridges, of which, only one is in the State system. Nine of the bridges measure over 20-feet long. VTrans is required to inspect them every two years in order to be eligible for Federal funding assistance.

There are no designated bicycle facilities in the town. Due to the terrain, and existing roadway widths, bicycling and walking paths could be dangerous. The Town, however, encourages bicycling, walking and hiking in areas that are safe.

The Rutland Region has studied where to locate a proposed Bypass, to relieve some of Rutland City's congestion, for more than twenty-five years. In recent years Vtrans has had transportation studies of the Rutland region prepared in conjunction with the proposed bypass. The studies have recommended that a bypass not be located in the Town of Mendon.

Road maintenance, including repairs, upgrades and snow plowing are the most significant items in the Town's budget and are basic needs for the residents. One option available for towns is the adoption and completion of two programs aimed at establishing effective road maintenance programs:

1. Adopting "codes and standards" for maintenance as promoted by the Vermont Department of Transportation.
2. Completing a network inventory. The inventory includes identifying roads, the location and condition of all bridges and culverts, with a global positioning system (GPS) marker. The Rutland Regional Planning Commission is available to assist the town with this program

When completed together, these programs allow a town to reduce, by 10%, the matching funds it pays as its part of the project construction costs, when participating in special state highway grant programs.

### **Goals**

1. Improve the quality of Mendon's transportation facilities in order to promote safety, alleviate congestion and maintain the scenic quality of its roads wherever possible.
2. Promote a multi-modal transportation system.
3. Ensure that future development does not endanger the public investment in the transportation system.
4. Preserve the scenic quality of Mendon's "back roads."

### **Recommendations:**

1. Aggressively enforce speed limits and other traffic laws and consider the implications of reduced speed limits within the village area.
2. Support improvements to US 4 that will provide for the future regional and local traffic requirements, particularly "best access management practices."
  - a. Restrict or limit the number of curb cuts per parcel or linear feet of roadway;
  - b. Provide separation between curb cuts and public road intersections;
  - c. Encourage shared parking and access;
  - d. Encourage pedestrian sidewalks or reserve land for future sidewalk development for pedestrian safety wherever practical.
3. Inventory the bridges, culverts and roads and adopt standards to reduce the local matching funds required on projects.
4. Develop a capital improvement program for the transportation infrastructure.
5. Support public transit service and encourage its use to the local community and tourists.
6. Develop and adopt a highway ordinance that establishes the policies and procedures for the maintenance and upgrading of existing town roads and describes construction standards and procedures for accepting new roads and driveway accesses into the town highway system.
7. Pursue alternative funding sources for improvements, such as the enhancement program and the bicycle/pedestrian program.
8. Continue participation in the regional Transportation Planning Programs through the Rutland Regional Planning Commission.



9. Continue to oppose the construction of any proposed bypass in, or close to, Mendon.

## **RECREATION**

Mendon residents currently utilize two recreational facilities. The Mendon Recreation Area located on South Mendon Road consists of a little league baseball field, horseshoe pits, and over two miles of nature trails that are available year round for hiking, cross-country skiing, snow shoeing, and other passive uses. Motorized vehicles are not allowed.

The Barstow Memorial School provides for outdoor playgrounds, baseball, soccer, tennis, and other recreational facilities. The school library is open to both Mendon and Chittenden residents. There are various legal trails available for use in Mendon. Use of these trails is at the discretion of the Selectboard.

Hunting and fishing have always been favorite sports for many citizens of Mendon. To be in compliance with the law, permission must be obtained from the property owner before hunting on posted property.

Other recreational facilities exist in adjoining towns and are available by fee to Mendon residents. The surrounding rural nature of the town provides for other activities such as camping, hiking, biking, picnicking, nature walks, cross-country skiing, and snowmobiling.

Mendon is a member of the Rutland County Recreation District along with Rutland Town, Rutland City, and West Rutland. A survey was conducted of these communities about household priorities for fitness facilities, social activities, day care, senior programs, and types of amenities they would like to see in a recreation center, and their financial willingness to pay user fees and taxes to fund the center. The District's desire is to create a dynamic, visible facility that offers something important for everyone, incorporating as many amenities as determined needed by the community. With a goal of being as self-sufficient as possible, the District is managed by a board of supervisors with one member from each municipality in the District. Each member has one equal vote regardless of the size of the population or the grand list.

The purpose of the District is to strengthen local governments by promoting the more efficient and economical operation of recreation services within the participating municipalities. This will be accomplished by developing a regional recreation community center and other facilities. This would permit and encourage quality recreation and leisure opportunities that will promote positive lifestyle habits and contribute to the health and wellness of residents of and visitors to the District. In so doing, a new level of regionalism will be fostered through cooperation that will contribute to the economic health of the region by creating jobs.

### **Recommendations:**

Utilize all Class IV roads in the town for recreational trails, especially when they occur in the Conservation Districts, and that voluntary development and maintenance of these trails be continued for public use.

Encourage the un-posting by private landowners of as much undeveloped land as possible for hunting, fishing, trapping, and other non-invasive or destructive outdoor activities.

Encourage the development of new primitive-style camping facilities.

Consider requiring that an adequate percentage of the total area of development in new subdivisions be set aside for private and structured recreational facilities. (Zoning has addressed this for PUD's)

Designate Wheelerville Road as a scenic road to help preserve the scenic beauty of the road.

Reconstruct the South Mendon recreation property for uses that are more compatible with its residential character.

## **PUBLIC FACILITIES**

Public facilities currently exist in the Village District in the form of the Town Hall and the Town Garage. The Town Garage property may have sufficient land area to incorporate additional town structures that could function for various community activities or town business functions.

The other existing public facility is the 16 acre recreation area on South Mendon Road.

## **TELECOMMUNICATIONS**

Mendon's goal is to allow for the installation of wireless telecommunications facilities, within the town limits, that will provide good service for the residents and local businesses while preserving the aesthetic character of its neighborhoods, property values, natural areas, ridgelines, historic districts, community preservation goals and environment.

The popularity of cell phones and home computers, together with the ever-increasing dependence on computers in the business community, dictate that Mendon take the necessary steps to allow for new telecommunications facilities. Mendon should always have the mechanisms in place, within the town By-Laws, that will clearly present the guidelines for development of new telecommunications facilities.

In 2004 the Mendon Planning Commission prepared, and the Select Board approved, a comprehensive zoning By-Law for the regulation of wireless telecommunications facilities. The new By-Law sets the requirements for the installation, operation and maintenance of new wireless telecommunications facilities within the town boundaries.

High-speed internet connections are currently available to residents and businesses in Mendon through both dial-up modem connections and broadband cable connections. Cell phone service is adequate in most areas of the town, however, additional land-based facilities could improve cell phone service in some areas. The future development of land-based wireless telecommunications facilities will continue to be governed by the current By-Laws. As new technology develops, Mendon may need to amend those By-Laws, as appropriate, to allow for the development of different land-based facilities.

## **Recommendations:**

As new technology develops, improving the quality of telecommunications, revisit the Telecommunications By-Law and revise it as necessary, to insure that the By-Law adequately describes the guidelines under which new facilities can be constructed or implemented in the Town of Mendon. Strive to improve the quality of wireless service to all areas of the Town.

### **UTILITY AND FACILITY PLAN**

The Utility and Facility Plan for the town of Mendon covers the portion of this plan concerning present and recommended community facilities and public utilities and existing and proposed educational, recreational, and other public sites, buildings, facilities, including hospitals, libraries, water supply, sewage disposal and similar facilities and services, and recommendations to meet future needs for community facilities and services, including childcare providers. The town does not have the need to address power generating plants, transmission lines, or storm drainage. Reference is hereby made to the Utility and Facility Map attached hereto.

#### **Recommendations:**

The town of Mendon generally has adequate utilities and facilities. There are potential plans to increase the size and quality of the South Mendon Road athletic facility and the new town clerk's office has been constructed and occupied in March of 2005.

### **CHILDCARE**

Ensuring accessible, affordable, quality childcare is integral to sound economic development planning. In Mendon, there are currently two registered childcare providers. A registered family childcare provider is defined as an in-home child care business, regulated by the State of Vermont, that can care for six children under the age of 6 full-time (up to two under the age of 2) and four school-age children part time. Of these, there are only 3 spaces for new children, according to Vermont Childcare Information Services, a section of the Child Development Division of the State. These providers are shown on Mendon's Utilities and Facilities Map.

To understand better the ability of these two facilities to meet the childcare needs of Mendon families, an analysis of the number of children estimated to need care, and the type of care needed, is necessary. In Mendon there are presently approximately 198 children under the age of fourteen. Thirty-seven (19%) of these children are under the age of five. The number of children under the age of five has decreased by 46%, indicating the probability of a decreased need for child care in Mendon. The total number of children under the age of fourteen has increased slightly, indicating an aging child cohort, from infants and toddlers to school age children.

#### **Mendon – CHILDREN AGES 0 – 14 YEARS, 1990 / 2000** (Source: U.S. Census 1990, 2000)

<b>Age</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>% Change</b>
Infant-Preschool ( 0-5 yrs )	69	37	- 46%
6 – 14 years	151	161	7%
Total	220	198	10%

Oftentimes single-parent households are more likely to need childcare, than married couple families. The total children under age seventeen in single-parent households has increased from 34 children in 1990 to 48 children in 2000.

The employment status of families with children can also affect their childcare needs. In Mendon, 16% of the population is employed by service sector jobs such as arts, entertainment, recreation, food and accommodation services. Parents working in this sector may need childcare services that are available during non-traditional hours (evenings, nights and weekends). In Mendon, one registered childcare provider's hours are from 6:30 am to 5:30 pm, Monday through Friday. This provider is able to accommodate drop-ins and emergency care as well. Mendon providers may not accommodate the needs of families working in the service sector with the regular hours they operate. Also, there are 55 children under six years old that live in situations where both parents are employed. These children are more likely to need childcare than children in families where only one parent is in the workforce.

Often, children are not cared for by registered childcare providers within the town in which they live. Informal childcare arrangements may be meeting some of the need of Mendon residents, though in these situations there is the added possibility of instability and lack of quality control offered by the registration and licensing process. Also, many parents opt for an arrangement close to their workplace, outside their town of residence. Yet another scenario is that other family members (aunts, uncles, older siblings and grandparents) are meeting some of the childcare needs in Mendon.

The information provided here begins to analyze the childcare situation in Mendon. It looks at available information on registered childcare facilities in the town, and specific family situations that may affect childcare needs. While the overall number of children potentially needing childcare services is declining, there is not enough current data gathered to determine whether the childcare needs of Mendon residents are being met. Further assessment of the situation should be performed to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the available childcare infrastructure, the extent to which informal childcare providers are meeting the determined need, and the extent to which childcare providers outside of Mendon are filling the needs of Mendon families.

### **Recommendations:**

Childcare services should be followed up on in the following manner:

- Work with neighboring communities to support childcare services;
- Encourage larger employers in Mendon to provide childcare options for their employees;
- Encourage the growth of the “informal economy” and include home occupations such as childcare, local artisans, craftspeople and seasonal businesses;
- Support the expansion of licensed childcare facilities and services by assessing whether there are barriers to increasing the capacity of childcare facilities in town zoning regulations;
- Increase understanding of the correlation between strong economies and the availability of safe and affordable childcare.

## **RELATIONSHIP TO DEVELOPMENT TRENDS AND PLANS FOR ADJACENT MUNICIPALITIES AND AREAS IN THE REGION**

The residential, commercial, and all other uses described in the plan are consistent in location and in character to the current uses and development trends in all surrounding municipalities and are consistent with other area and regional development.

### **Recommendation:**

The planning commission recommends that Mendon Zoning be continued and reviewed from time to time to insure that land use in Mendon is controlled reasonably and prudently.

## **ENERGY PLAN**

The town of Mendon relies on Central Vermont Public Service Corporation to provide its electrical energy needs. Other sources of energy are fuel oil, gas, wood, and solar electric. No scarcity currently exists although the Planning Commission recognizes that conservation is a prudent course in this field. Other areas of this plan address the recommendations for building integrity designed to economically use and conserve energy resources. The policy of Mendon is to encourage development in concert with all applicable land use regulations and promote the conservation of energy.

### **Recommendations:**

The planning commission does not recommend any major changes at this time. However, the Planning Commission encourages continued emphasis on energy conservation and the use of renewable energy resources to the extent possible.

## ***NATURAL RESOURCES***

### **GEOLOGY**

In most parts of Mendon, solid rock is within 25 feet of the surface of the land. This layer, referred to as bedrock, forms the crust of the earth, and not only influences the shape of the land surface, but serves as the foundation for all natural processes occurring within the area. Bedrock in the Mendon area is usually covered by a thin veneer of unconsolidated material known as till, which is a mixture of soil materials ranging in size from clay, silt, and sand-sized particles to large boulders. The till tends to be thinner at higher elevations and deeper in the valleys. It is important for development that the depth to bedrock be as deep as possible. Shallow soils often make excavation difficult and on-site sewage disposal impractical.

### **SOILS**

Prime agricultural soils have qualities for retaining fertility such as high organic matter, favorable drainage, slope, depth, texture, and moisture content. These represent irreplaceable resources. Mendon also has scattered areas of prime agricultural, secondary and tertiary lands.

Act 200 states that "preservation of the agricultural and forest productivity of the land and the economic viability of agricultural units, conservation of the recreational opportunity afforded by the state's hills, forests, streams and lakes, wise use of the state's nonrenewable earth and mineral reserves, and the protection of the beauty of the landscape are matters of public good." The Town agrees with this policy. It is the intention of the Town to protect these lands and preserve the long term viability of farm and forest land. To the extent zoning permits, when approached with a project, the Town will encourage P.U.D.s and cluster development in order to preserve as much forest and agricultural land as possible.

Other forms of land use compatible with forest and agricultural land will be permitted. In the case of private land, the landowner's permission must be granted for any use.

### **HYDROLOGY**

The highest level of the water table, as measured from the soil surface at a given time of the year, determines the depth of the seasonal high water table. The water must remain at this level for at least one month in order for a given soil type to achieve its rating. A seasonal high water table of 0-4 feet is easily polluted since little or no soil is above to protect it. A significant part of Mendon is in this category.

### **SEPTIC WASTE**

On-site sewage disposal is usually a soil absorption system for waste disposal consisting of two parts: a tank for holding, settling and microbial breakdown, and a distribution system for the effluent from the tank. This is spread through a leach field which absorbs the effluent. Under ideal conditions the soil acts as a natural filter by absorbing and allowing further biological processing of the effluent. The characteristics of the soil are of major importance to the function of the absorption system. Primary considerations are: permeability, percolation rate, hydraulic conductivity, depth to seasonal high water table, flooding, slope, and depth to bedrock or hardpan.

There is land in Mendon which has severe limitations for on-site sewage disposal. These limitations must be overcome by proper engineering and construction. The U.S. Soil Conservation Service categorizes septic tank suitability ratings as: Slight, Moderate, or Severe. They use the following criteria: Slopes, High Water Table, High Bedrock or Hardpan, Flood Plains, and High Permeability. A rating of "Severe" is indicative of one or more unfavorable soil properties. The same criteria apply to construction suitability.

Detailed soil studies have been done in parts of Mendon, and these are recorded on the map as Soil Types. Soil Association refers to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service's General Soil Map of Rutland County.

### **TERRAIN AND SLOPE**

Mendon is predominantly mountainous, ranging from a low of 805 feet above sea level on Town Line Road, to a high of 4,235 feet above sea level close to the summit of Killington Peak. There

are several major peaks in the Town. These mountains and environs are a unique natural resource, since they serve as watershed, wildlife habitat, climatic barrier and recreational areas.

Most land uses are highly dependent on terrain and there are some uses which, only by rigorous attention to environmental concerns, should be allowed. Natural habitat and compatibility with the landscape should be of primary concern to any development in the Town. Below are listed the slope categories with their suggested development capabilities.

- 0 – 3%            Suitable for some development. However some areas may have a severe drainage problem due to poor soils and possible pollution of wells in the area, as well as insufficient runoff of groundwater.
- 3 - 8 %           Suitable for single family dwelling, secondary roads and small commercial and industrial buildings.
- 8 - 14 %          Suitable for single family dwellings on large lots. Some problems of washouts or erosion may occur.
- over 15%          Due to the high potential for environmental degradation, construction permitted only where zoning ordinance allows. Extreme caution must be exercised and development must meet all applicable local and state laws, ordinances, and rules.

### **Recommendations:**

It is recommended that in areas with poor soils, and/or high water table, that any proposed development be reviewed for sewer hookup, larger lot sizes, and septic system design review by the designated town official, PRIOR to approval of subdivision or any plot plan approval.

Allow limited development in areas of the town containing steep slopes, but only under strict controls which maintain as much as possible the natural beauty of the area except for those structures that are reasonably necessary for development of ski lifts.

Utilize extreme caution for development on slopes of 25% or greater.

## **WATER RESOURCES**

The Town of Mendon lies within the Otter Creek drainage area. Ground water supplies vary considerably within the Town, but are moderate to substantial overall, with recharging occurring naturally over the entire region. The quality of all ground and surface waters is excellent, and they are rated predominantly as Class A waters.

### **Recommendations:**

Utilize “off-stream” disposal techniques for all on-site sewage and waste disposal treatment systems.

Protect all identifiable ground water recharge areas from intensive development. Encourage bio-retention groundwater recharge techniques in landscape areas for new developments that propose an impermeable area of greater than 1- acre, to promote increased percolation and decrease runoff.

## **AGRICULTURE, FORESTS AND WILDLIFE**

Agricultural pursuit in Mendon reflects residents' interest in residential landscaping and home gardening. The acreage devoted to commercial agriculture is very limited and includes an apple orchard, sheep farming, maple sugaring and other small-scale farming.

The Town has State and Federal forest lands, large acreage supporting the Rutland City watershed and two designated Conservation Districts within its borders. The orderly planning effort in these areas shall be to keep these areas largely whole, undeveloped and un-fragmented. Where development does occur, it shall be minimal and un-concentrated.

Forests account for approximately 94% of Mendon's total acreage and are predominantly northern hardwoods. Presently there are few stands of mature trees. There are two designated state forests - Aiken State Forest, containing 907 acres, and Coolidge State Forest, encompassing 3,216 acres. The City of Rutland owns 3,736 acres, located in the Wheelerville area, that are preserved as a watershed protection area for the City's water supply.

Mendon has an abundance of diverse wildlife. Winters are severe in the mountains and shelter requirements are critical. The deer yards offer browse, shelter, and relief essential for survival. Upland elevations of 2,000 feet or more provide seasonal vegetative cover, and the presence of ledges and outcroppings, plus the relative isolation from human activity, provides a necessary habitat.

Seasonal bear habitat exists in the Town of Mendon. Rare and endangered species of plants and animals are present in the town as well. One site has been identified by the Vermont Non-Gamer and Natural Heritage Program. The approximate location of this site is shown on the Natural Resources Map 1. The town encourages the protection of the site, located in a remote area of publicly held lands, above 2500 feet elevation in an area with a slope greater than 25 percent.

### **Recommendations:**

Protect all forest areas on mountain peaks as scenic or natural areas, allowing only limited development that may be reasonably necessary in the Ski Area District.

Guide the development within the mapped seasonal bear habitat in accordance with the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources study of the effects of resort and residential development on black bears in Vermont.

Sustain the use of agriculture and forestry resources, within certain areas of the town, and follow best management practices for agriculture and silviculture operations.

Open all public forest lands within the town for multiple recreational uses.



It is recommended that all designated wetlands in Mendon be protected.

**Maps:** Natural Resources Maps 1 & 2

### **SPECIAL AREAS IN THE TOWN OF MENDON**

Mendon is unique in that a major portion of its approximately 22,000 acres is devoted to the public welfare. There are two designated state forests, Coolidge and Aiken, lands of the United States government, and lands of the City of Rutland. The grand total of the restricted lands is approximately 9,000 acres.

As is pointed out in other sections of the Plan, Mendon is particularly blessed since it is located within and/or surrounded by several of the Green Mountains for which the region receives tourist's raves during all four seasons of the year. The attractions include Killington, Pico, Mendon, Blue Ridge, and East Mountains. The Town, in order to protect the scenic beauty of its neighboring mountains, will restrict construction along high ground ridgelines, thereby protecting the quality of water aquifers, wildlife habitat, and preserving the beauty of the Town and its landscape. Public and private landowners will be encouraged to leave the access to undeveloped land "open" to the public, for hunting, fishing, hiking, skiing, or bird-watching in the mountains.

The historic sites and historic cemeteries in Mendon are mapped and designated on Map #1 in this Plan.

Wildlife habitat areas are indicated in Map #5, titled: "Deer Yards". Map #6 shows the "Land Use" designated as private and public-owned forests, conservation areas, and wetlands. The wetlands, principally the Mendon Brook, with its tributaries, meanders along Route 4 in Mendon, supplying the City of Rutland with much of its water supply.

Although the Town of Mendon has special historical, scenic and cultural values previously discussed, it has not identified sites of special scientific, architectural, or archeological value.

### **RESIDENTIAL DISTRICTS**

The purpose of Residential Districts is to designate housing areas and promote various types of housing that will not exceed the physical capabilities of the land or the availability of community facilities and services. In order to enhance and maintain the rural nature of Mendon, Planned Residential Developments (PRD's) are encouraged. Density incentives for PRD's with multi-family dwellings will promote the preservation of woodlands and incorporation of recreational activities within the project area. The same type of development is also encouraged in other districts where commercial and industrial activity is permitted.

Open space preservation and maintaining the rural character of these areas is encouraged. Development should take place in such a manner that natural areas and resources will be protected.

Residential building lots will be compatible with the developmental capability of the land. The property owner will have the responsibility for demonstrating the required capability prior to subdivision or development.

### **COMMERCIAL AND VILLAGE DISTRICTS**

The purpose of the Commercial District is to designate areas for commercial uses to serve the needs of both residents and visitors. Shopping, service, and lodging facilities are an asset to the Town. New Commercial establishments and light industries should be designed to provide adequate parking facilities. The character of the Town should be preserved and enhanced by the provision of suitable structures, landscaping and screening. Site-plan review by the Planning Commission is a required procedure accomplishing these goals. Planned Unit Developments (PUD's) and Planned Residential Developments (PRD's) are encouraged in these districts.

### **FLOODPLAIN DISTRICTS**

The purpose of these districts is to minimize any future losses of life or property due to flooding.

#### **Recommendations:**

Restrict the private and public uses within these areas.

### **CONSERVATION DISTRICTS**

The purpose of these districts is to protect those high elevations which have steep slopes, shallow soils and fragile or limited vegetation and which provide significant recharge of the ground and surface water supplies of the Town and region. They will also protect, as a natural resource, those lands which are essentially unsuitable for development and which are important for wildlife habitat, or have high potential for commercial forestry use.

The Conservation I District includes Coolidge State Forest, Aiken State Forest, private lands in Parkers Gore and lands north of U.S. Route 4 which are above the elevation of 2,500 feet.

The Conservation II District is an area along U.S. Route 4 which is generally unsuitable for development due to steep slopes, unstable soils, flood plains, and traffic problems.

These areas in the Town encourage wildlife habitat, forestry, agriculture, limited commercial recreation, noncommercial recreation, and limited single family residential in order not to increase the Town's need to provide facilities and services.

**HIGHLAND CONSERVATION:** Those lands of 2500 feet or above.

**UPLAND CONSERVATION:** Those lands from 2000 feet to 2499 feet.

**WETLANDS:** Marshy or swampy areas at least 2.5 acres in size.

**FOREST RESERVE:** Those lands which belong to the city, state, or federal government, and those lands which are unsuitable for development. In the city forest area snowmaking ponds should be allowed.

**SKI AREA DISTRICT:** The purpose of this district is to allow commercial ski area development in portions of the town that are adjacent to those areas already developed for skiing in the town of Killington. These areas are particularly well suited for skiing due to high elevation and their proximity to existing ski development.

The Ski Area District is in the eastern part of Parkers' Gore and is, from the standpoint of the developed portions of the town, remote mountain land.

Carefully planned commercial ski development should be allowed in this district, but the services that the Town provides, should be limited because of the remoteness of the area in relation to the other developed portions of Mendon.

**Recommendations:**

It is recommended that in the elevation range from 2,000 feet to 2499 feet, only land uses which do not require additional town facilities be encouraged and no development be permitted for elevations above 2500 feet other than limited single family residences or seasonal camps on large lots where the topography and soils will allow.

Open all public forest lands, within the Town, for recreational use.

Allow carefully planned ski area development in this district at any elevation and allow single family residences and seasonal camps on large lots where the topography and soils permit.

**STEEP SLOPES AND RIDGELINES**

When the steepness of slopes exceeds 15%, the suitability of land for development decreases significantly. On steep slopes, surface water runoff is increased. When vegetation is removed for the construction of roads and buildings, the area for absorption of precipitation is reduced. In turn, the susceptibility to increased rates of runoff may result in excessive erosion. Slopes greater than 20% in steepness present problems with complying with the Vermont Health Regulations governing subdivisions. Serious limitations to steep slope development also include depth of soil and access for emergency and delivery vehicles.

In addition, settlement in these areas may be extremely visible from other areas within Mendon and adjacent Towns. The Town of Mendon would like to protect its view-shed both within the Town and also the view-shed into adjacent towns from the Town of Mendon.

Ridgelines also present significant land use development problems. At high elevations, ridgeline precipitation is greater, air and soil temperatures are lower, soils are shallower and lower in nutrients, slopes are steeper, wind speeds are higher and re-establishing vegetative cover is difficult and slow to replenish.

In addition, areas with high elevation and ridgelines present striking visual features and are a significant feature of what Mendon residents consider to be our town’s unique landscape.

In an effort to preserve and protect the ridgelines and steep slopes in the Town, a new Ridgeline Overlay District has been approved by the Town voters as part of the overall zoning amendments. To see the areas within the town that have been selected as significant ridgeline and steep slope areas, please refer to the Ridgeline District Overlay Map located in the clerk’s office.

## **APPENDIX**

FUTURE LAND USE	MAP 1
TRANSPORTATION & COMMUNITY FACILITIES	MAP 2
NATURAL RESOURCES – MAP 1	MAP 3
NATURAL RESOURCES – MAP 2	MAP 4